

Much unhappiness and frustration is caused by the fact that in our society the law is commonly confused with justice, liberty, freedom and equality.

In truth, the law has very little to do with these fundamental moral principles. The law exists to help society defend itself; it is used by those who represent society as a weapon with which to dominate and discriminate against individual powers and freedoms. The law is man's inadequate attempt to turn justice – a theoretical concept – into practical reality. Sadly, it is invariably inspired more by the prejudices and self-interest of the lawmakers than by respect or concern for the rights of innocent individuals.

These misconceptions about the purpose of our law lead to much disappointment and frustration. And these misconceptions help to create a considerable amount of underlying toxic stress.

No society has ever had as many laws as we have. And yet few societies have had less justice.

Many of the laws which exist today were created not to protect individuals or communities but to protect the system. It is because such crimes threaten the security and sanctity of the system that theft and fraud often attract harsher sentences than crimes such as murder and rape which affect individuals – and (in society's terms) their less significant rights.

The irony is that although the law was originally introduced to protect individuals from tyranny, the law itself has become a tyrant. Today, few individuals can afford to take advantage of the protection offered by the law. The law oppresses the weak, the poor and the powerless and sustains itself and the powers which preserve it. The cost of litigation means that there is one law for the rich and no law at all for the poor. The result is that the law threatens and reduces the rights of the weak and strengthens and augments the rights of the powerful.

Things are made worse by the fact that the people employed by society to uphold and administer the law on behalf of the ordinary people too often take advantage of their positions to abuse their powers. The interpretation of the law is so often at the discretion of those who are paid to uphold it that those who have been hired by society become the law itself; neatly and effectively, society protects itself against any threat.

Too often society allows officers of the courts to abuse their powers to satisfy their own personal prejudices, grievances and ambitions. In return, society, and the structure which supports it, is protected by the people who benefit from its patronage. It is the worst sort of symbiotic relationship.

The final irony is that as respect for the law (and those hired to uphold it) diminishes so the divide between the law and justice grows ever wider.

When people who are given the power to protect society disapprove of something which threatens their status, they introduce a new law. As political parties come and go, so we accumulate layer after layer of new laws. It doesn't matter if the new laws conflict with the old laws as long as all the laws help to strengthen the status of the State.

Meanwhile, as the oppression of individuals continues, lawlessness (and disrespect for the law) grows among officials and those in power. Brutality, arrogance, corruption and hypocrisy have all damaged public faith in the law but the only response from society has been to create new laws to outlaw disapproval. Society's primary interest is to protect itself and society is not concerned with justice, freedom or equality since those are values which are appreciated only by individuals. Society is concerned with progress and power and its own survival.